

## Urban Agriculture at the U.S. Botanic Garden

Agriculture is the cornerstone of human survival. The more than 7.8 billion people alive in the world today depend on plants for food, clothing, shelter, energy, and other critical resources. Since the U.S. Botanic Garden's creation 200 years ago, one of the Garden's primary functions has been growing and demonstrating plants for agriculture and economic plants to the public.

Connecting people and agriculture is a critical need given the lack of exposure to agriculture and food production for most Americans today and the great challenge in successfully feeding our growing populations. With ever more people living in urban areas, understanding agriculture through an urban lens can provide an educational opportunity.

Using its urban setting and building on its long history of growing plants and educating people about them, the USBG is working to promote science and education through sustainable agriculture in urban settings; support health and wellbeing in urban communities by increasing food access through local food production; and engagement through meaningful connections with food and agriculture. By building a network of organizations helping with food production and education, the Garden is strengthening people's capacity to transform their lives, institutions, and communities through engagement in urban agriculture.

Read below to learn more about the U.S. Botanic Garden's urban agriculture work.



### Urban Agriculture Resilience Program

The U.S. Botanic Garden partnered with the American Public Gardens Association (the Association) to offer immediate support to urban agriculture and other programs at public gardens affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. In June 2020, the USBG and the Association established the Urban Agriculture Resilience Program to build capacity, prevent shortfalls, and gather best practices from established programs across the U.S. public garden community. The partnership made awards across the United States to help sustain urban agriculture and community food growing during this challenging time.

With the assistance of these funds, participating gardens in 19 states and Washington, D.C., are growing and distributing produce, especially to communities facing challenges; maintaining and expanding urban agriculture and other food growing education programs; and promoting wellness and nutrition by educating the public about growing and consuming fruits and vegetables. Beyond offering immediate support, the Urban Agriculture Resilience Program will provide insight into successful approaches and opportunities for public gardens to improve food access and advance food and agriculture education in urban communities.

See the awardees and learn more about their work:

Learn more at [www.USBG.gov/UrbanAgricultureResilience](http://www.USBG.gov/UrbanAgricultureResilience)



## Training Veterans in Urban Farming as a Career

The USBG and the National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT) have partnered to create week-long Armed to Urban Farm sustainable agriculture workshops for military veterans and their farm partners. Armed to Urban Farm gives military veterans an opportunity to experience sustainable, profitable small-scale farming enterprises and learn how to start their own as a career. Armed to Urban Farm, which is based on NCAT's popular Armed to Farm program, combines engaging classroom sessions with farm tours and hands-on experience. Participants learn about business planning, budgeting, recordkeeping, marketing, urban soils, land access, vegetable production, and more. Participants gain the basic principles of operating a sustainable farming enterprise. In addition, attendees join a nationwide network of supportive farmer-veterans and agricultural professionals.

### Upcoming workshops

Baltimore, MD - postponed to 2021 [new date TBD]

Previous workshops: Cleveland - September 2019, Washington, D.C. - September 2018

[Learn more about the Armed to Urban Farm program](#)

## Building Urban Ag Capacity at Public Gardens

The U.S. Botanic Garden has partnered with Chicago Botanic Garden's Windy City Harvest, an established urban agriculture program within the public garden system, to develop a train-the-trainer program. This collaboration is providing hands-on, practical support for public gardens and their partner organizations interested in expanding urban agriculture programming. Based on feedback from other gardens, the collaboration has designed and offered three-day intensive urban agriculture workshops for public garden professionals and their partners.

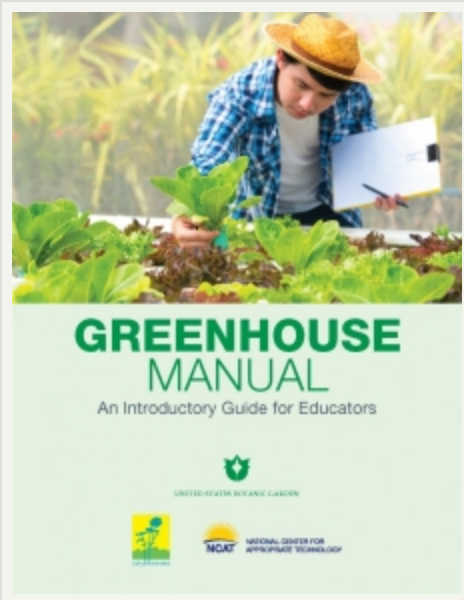
The workshops incorporate topics such as designing urban agriculture programs, developing community partnerships, selecting and establishing urban farms, and identifying funding opportunities, and evaluating and communicating program successes. Participants have firsthand experiences on urban farms and access to the resources developed over nearly two decades of the Chicago Botanic Garden's work in urban agriculture.

### Upcoming workshops

Check back for future workshops

Previous workshops: New Orleans - March 2020, Chicago - August 2019





## Greenhouse Manual and Trainings for Educators

The U.S. Botanic Garden, the National Center for Appropriate Technology, and City Blossoms recognized the emerging need for user-friendly guidance on using greenhouses and maximizing their potential in the school setting. To that end, the partners developed an introductory manual for educators wanting to better use greenhouses for programming. The manual clearly and concisely lays out a basic understanding of greenhouses, how to integrate them into lessons, and how to use greenhouses in classroom curricula and out-of-school activities.

The manual includes lesson plans as well as basic information on layout and operations of a greenhouse, growing plants (especially during the school year), seedling nutrition, identifying and treating diseases, pest management in greenhouses, basic budgeting, and succession planting.

This useful resource will help facilitate transformative learning experiences in schools nationwide, while cultivating students' appreciation of the importance of

**Download the manual as PDF >**

Upcoming trainings

Check back for future trainings

Learn more about this partnership and manual

## Report: The Role of Botanic Gardens in Urban Agriculture

The U.S. Botanic Garden (USBG) and the American Public Gardens Association undertook this study to identify viable urban agriculture program models that are both environmentally, socially, and economically enriching, and to better understand how public gardens could achieve meaningful impact. The Association undertook a research approach to evaluate the state of urban agriculture at community-based nonprofit and for-profit organizations, government agencies, universities, and other public gardens. Insights were gained by exploring literature, surveying the community of practice, and interviewing practitioners and experts about urban agriculture initiatives and educational programming.

**Download the report [PDF] >**



## Online Food and Agriculture Programs

As part of our ongoing educational programming, we offer periodic online programs about food and agriculture, including programs specifically focused on

Find upcoming programs at [www.USBG.gov/OnlinePrograms](http://www.USBG.gov/OnlinePrograms)

## The USBG Kitchen Garden

The USBG Kitchen Garden demonstrates food growing in an urban setting, with tours, tastings, workshops, and children's activities . The fruits and vegetables are used for educational classes and cooking demonstrations, and excess produce is donated to local community-based hunger relief organizations.

Find the Kitchen Garden in Bartholdi Fountain and Gardens

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**Source URL:** <https://m.usbg.gov/urbanagriculture>